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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
BUREAU OF ANIMAL INDUSTRY,
DAIRY DIVISION.

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MILK AS A FOOD.

Economy in the diet does not always depend upon limiting the use of certain foods, but it is sometimes a question of actually increasing the use of foods which furnish nutritive material at relatively low cost. Milk belongs to the latter class, and the housewife would do well to study its food value and decide whether her family is using as much as it should. The average person in this country uses only a little more than a half pint of milk daily, and this quantity can very profitably be increased when safe milk is available.

Many people think of milk only as a beverage, but if they understood that it is in reality a nourishing food, they would increase their daily allowance.

We eat foods for two main reasons: First, to renew body wastes and promote growth by forming new tissues and fluids, and, second, to supply energy for carrying on body functions. Milk contains the body-building materials (protein and mineral substances, such as lime and phosphorus), and also supplies energy.

The following table, compiled by specialists of the Department of Agriculture, shows the quantities of various foods needed to supply as much protein or energy as one quart of milk:

Protein.	Energy.
1 quart of milk is equal to— 7 ounces of sirloin steak. 6 ounces of round steak. 4.3 eggs. 8.6 ounces of fowl.	1 quart of milk is equal to— 11 ounces of sirloin steak. 12 ounces of round steak. 8½ eggs. 10.7 ounces of fowl.

Another method of comparison is shown by the table below, in which the relative value of certain foods as economical sources of protein is given:

Milk at—	Is as cheap as sirloin steak at—	Or eggs at—
7 cents a quart.	16.3 cents a pound.	17.6 cents a dozen.
8 " "	18.6 " " "	20.1 " " "
9 " "	21.0 " " "	22.6 " " "
10 " "	23.3 " " "	25.1 " " "
12 " "	27.9 " " "	30.2 " " "
15 " "	34.9 " " "	37.7 " " "

According to this table, if milk is selling at 10 cents a quart, sirloin steak must sell as low as 23.3 cents a pound, and eggs at 25.1 cents a dozen to supply protein at equal cost.

To supply energy at equal cost.

When milk is—	Sirloin steak must not be more than—	And eggs not more than—
7 cents a quart.	9.9 cents a pound.	9.3 cents a dozen.
8 " "	11.3 " " "	10.6 " " "
9 " "	12.8 " " "	11.9 " " "
10 " "	14.2 " " "	13.2 " " "
12 " "	17.0 " " "	15.9 " " "
15 " "	21.3 " " "	19.8 " " "

It can be seen, therefore, that milk even at 15 cents a quart is a cheap source of energy as compared with sirloin steak and eggs.

In comparing foods it is necessary to consider both the protein and the energy furnished. Neither one alone can properly be used as a basis of comparison, nor is there any correct way to reckon the value of a food by considering the total amount of nutritive elements.

It is very difficult to compare foods on the basis of the mineral matter they contain, but all physiologists agree that milk is extremely valuable from this standpoint. Indeed, it is the food prepared by nature especially for the growth and development of the young. A quart of milk a day is a good allowance for a young, growing child.

In addition to being an economical food, milk is usually easily digested and requires no cooking or other preparation for the table. Specialists of the department have also found that it is digested better when taken with other foods.

There are innumerable ways to use milk in cookery, such as in puddings, blancmange, soups, chowder, "junket," etc., and in all these ways it is both appetizing and nourishing.

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